

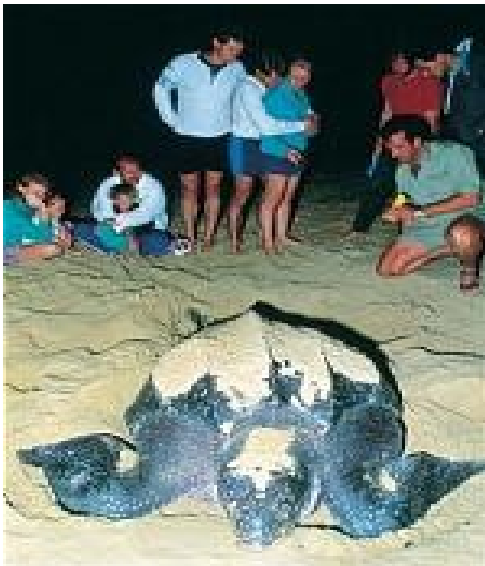
THE ZULU KINGDOM UPDATE



PRODUCED BY TOURISM KWAZULU-NATAL, UK

www.zulu.org.za

Events 'not to be missed' in 2009 in KwaZulu-Natal... January to June 2009



January

The first quarter of the year is a good time to visit the [iSimangaliso Wetland Park](#) (Greater St Lucia Wetland Park). This World Heritage Site's 220 000 hectares include attractions such as Kosi Bay, Lake Sibaya, Sodwana Bay, uMkhuze Game Reserve, Lake St Lucia and Cape Vidal. Between December and March its beaches are the best place to do some **turtle spotting**! Watch in wonder as Loggerhead and Leatherback hatchlings making their treacherous journey to the ocean. Base yourself at [Rocktail Bay Lodge](#), [Kosi Forest Camp](#), [Thonga Beach Lodge](#), or [Kosi Bay Lodge](#) amongst others.

January is always **Battlefields Month** in KwaZulu-Natal. This year was the 130th anniversary of the Battles of Isandlwana and Rorkes drift and poignant, commemorative re-enactments were celebrated on the anniversary date, 22nd January. This year, the David Rattray Memorial ½ Marathon (21km) was run between the two battlefields on 24th January to raise funds for his charity and a Descendants Luncheon was hosted at Isandlwana Lodge. A great experience all year round. Guests can stay at [Isandlwana Lodge](#) or [Fugitives Drift Lodge](#), amongst others.

Adrenaline addicts converged between 15 - 17 January 2009 for the annual **Dusi Canoe Marathon** – one of the toughest canoe races in the world! Almost 2000 paddlers pitted their nerves and skills for 120km over 3 days, between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, with Ant Stott declared the overall winner. www.dusi.org.za





February

Seventeen thousand or so entrants swam the 36th annual **Midmar Mile** on 7th and 8th February 2009 including 13 Olympians. Silver medallist in Beijing last year, Keri-Anne Payne from Great Britain was the overall winner of the women's 14-30 years event. The Midmar Mile is the world's largest open water swimming event.

<http://www.midmarmile.co.za>



Whilst in the Midlands, after Dad visits the famous **Nottingham Brewery** for a taste of a Pickled Pig and possibly a swig or two of Pye-eyed Possum www.brewery.co.za, why not also take the family along for some **Ice Cream Tasting?** The Ballina Ice-cream Farm on the Fort Nottingham Road serves up decadent REAL farm fresh ice cream with daily demonstrations too!

www.ballina.co.za. Some of the fabulous places to base yourselves in the Midlands include [Woodridge Country Lodge](#), [Fourdoun Spa](#), [Rawdons](#), [Hartford House](#) and [Lythwood Lodge](#).

March

Baba Indaba, South Africa's premier Baby, toddler and parenting exhibition and show will be running at the Durban Exhibition Centre from Friday, 27 March 2009 to Wednesday, 29 April 2009.

Why not squeeze in a **frogging safari** (the wet season usually runs from November to March) at Amakhosi Safari Lodge in Zululand! A what? You got it! This amazing experience sees 'froggers' donning wellies and torches and heading into the bush tracking down more than 32 species of frog in the "lions den" in the middle of the night. Ribbit! www.amakhosi.com



April



3rd – 12th April 2009 will see the **2009 Nissan UCI MTB World Cup** season opens in Pietermaritzburg, with the first event of this stature staged in Africa. The triple status of the event will see Cross Country, Downhill and 4 Cross competitions being staged with some of the very best riders in the world competing.

<http://www.mtbworldcupsa.co.za>

The **Ladysmith Swartkop Challenge** on the weekend of 4th and 5th April 2009 is an extreme sport event for teams of 20 + 2 leaders to draw a gun weighing some 1300kg up a hill of up to 1:1 over a course of some 130m. It is inspired by feats of arms in the South African War of 1899-1902 when heavy guns were repeatedly mounted on the top of koppies and manpower was the only resource once the incline became too steep for draught animals. The Challenge duplicates

Swartkop where 14 guns were mounted for the Battle of Vaalkraai - one of the several attempts to lift the Siege of Ladysmith, which kept the British Empire on edge for 118 days. The origins of the Naval Gun Run Competition are based on the feats of the Naval Brigades during the defence and relief of Ladysmith for which 16 VC's were awarded. Prize Money of at least R20,000 will be competed for in timed runs and the fastest team will receive the Perpetual Trophy of a working model of the long-range 12pdr mounted on its wooden trail.

<http://www.swartkopchallenge.com/>



Over the Easter weekend (9 – 13 April 09), all music lovers and other Glastonbury regulars should definitely head to the Underberg for **Splashy Fen** - one of the country's premier contemporary music festivals featuring leading local artists not to mention a winning craft village and fabulous food stalls. www.splashyfen.co.za





Saturday 25th April is the not-to-be-missed **Stables' Grape Crushing Festival** - www.stableswine.co.za. The hectic summer harvesting season concludes with an opportunity for wine lovers to "stomp" their own grapes. In the classic French tradition the grapes are foot-stomped after careful cleaning, and the juices then used to make the season's last wine. The Stables will also have pony rides and face painting for the kids, as well as boerewors and prego rolls, cheeseboards, beer and soft drinks available for sale on the day.

May

9th to 12th May sees Durban host thousands of international guests for the Annual [Indaba](#) Travel Exhibition at the Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC) and International Convention Centre (ICC) - showcasing Southern African tourism products and services for the international travel trade.



The **Karkloof Classic Mountain Bike Festival** takes place from 8th to 10th May 2009. Now in its second festival year, the Mr Price Karkloof Classic MTB Festival is the largest MTB festival in South Africa and brings riders even more value than before, with three days of awesome riding, innovative tracks, great entertainment and a country atmosphere in the picturesque Karkloof Valley outside Howick. <http://www.karkloofclassic.co.za/>

Only the bravest of souls sign up to run the famous **Comrades Marathon**. Usually on 16th June every year, this year it will be held on 24th May 2009 to avoid clashing with the FIFA Confederations Cup soccer tournament. This ultra distance race of nearly 90 km is run annually by some 14000 runners between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, was founded by Vic Clapham in 1921 as an inspirational memorial to those who served in the Great War of 1914 - 1918. www.comrades.com. The race this year will be a "down run" from Pietermaritzburg to Durban, starting at the Pietermaritzburg City Hall and finishing at Sahara Kingsmead Cricket Stadium.



Those not wanting to watch the big marathon can enjoy the **Fort Nottingham Highland Gathering** and festival, also on 16th May, also in the Midlands, which will encompass festival events, exhibitors, food stalls, highland dancing and athletic games typically found at a Scottish Gathering such as the Breamar Games.

From 29 – 31 May 2009 is the **Attitude at Altitude** Mountain Biking weekend which includes a night ride on the | Friday, a challenging morning ride up Mike's pass (more than 600m ascent!) with lunch at the top! Prize giving will be Saturday night at [Cathedral Peak Hotel](#). Sunday ends with a morning technical single track ride on Cathedral Peak's cross country course.

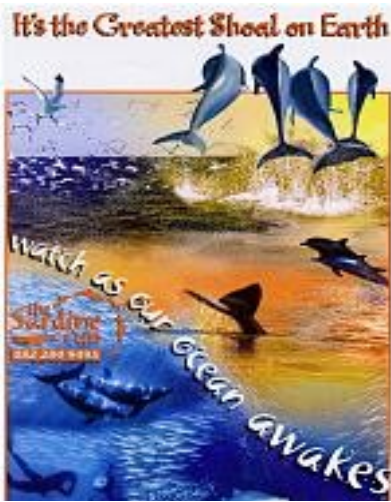
Also watch out for the **Kamberg Trout Festival** from 21 – 24 May 2009 and **The Royal Show** in Pietermaritzburg from 22 – 31 May. www.midlandsmeander.co.za

June

The 20th June will see the **British Lions taking on South Africa at the ABSA stadium (Kings Park) in Durban.**

Now here's a thought! Why not head to the Battlefield town of Dundee on 27th June to partake in their **Annual Biltong Festival**. I can almost picture all the ex-Saffas drooling at the thought and booking their tickets! If you are in the area earlier that month (or are not a fan of dried raw meat – perish the thought!) then opt instead for the annual **French Soiree & Commemoration Prince Imperial** which will also be hosted by Endumeni (Dundee) Tourism on 6th and 7th June. For more info visit www.tourdundee.co.za

The Midlands Meander Festival is also a good event to watch out for between 26th June and 7th July 2009. Where better to meander your way through the abundance of tasty, local produce?
www.midlandsmearder.co.za



You might also want to sign up to the Sardine Hotline (I kid you not!) for up to the minute text updates on the location of the **Annual Sardine Run**! Gazillions of little silver fish, followed by thousands of dolphins, followed by hundreds of sharks – not to mention birds – and fishermen! The Greatest Shoal on Earth! They even beach themselves some years. The Sardine Fever Festival is in full swing for both June and July in and around Margate on the South Coast. Dates for the Amanzimtoti Sardine Splash Festival depend on the lil' fishies' arrival!
www.sunnymargate.com

A fundraising sporting event called the **Polar Bear Swim** will be run on 21st June in the icy waters of the Dragons Peak Dam in the Central Drakensberg, raising funds for the Estcourt SPCA

The 3rd Durban Fashion Week will be held from 25th to 28th June at the Suncoast Casino and Entertainment World.

What will you do this year in the amazing Zulu Kingdom?

Sincere thanks to www.sa-venues.com for some of these event updates.

For more information, please visit www.zulu.org.za or contact Ethos Marketing, the UK office for Tourism KwaZulu-Natal on 01403 243 619 or info@ethosmarketing.co.uk.

Many thanks to Roger de la Harpe and any other photographers, for the use of their images.

Hundreds of high res images of KwaZulu-Natal can be downloaded from <http://gallery.ethosmarketing.co.uk/photo/tkzn>

Whilst every care has been taken, we apologize if any incorrect information has been taken from outdated websites.

If any KZN suppliers have news snippets that they would like to see included in this newsletter please email 300 words plus your website address and contact details to Claire@ethosmarketing.co.uk